



(S//SI) SCS and Executive Protection

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(S//SI) You may know that the Special Collection Service (SCS) is a joint NSA-CIA organization whose mission is to covertly collect SIGINT from official U.S. establishments abroad, such as embassies and consulates. Do you also know that SCS helps protect top-level U.S. officials when they travel overseas? One of SCS's duties is to assist in Executive Protection, working directly with U.S. Secret Service (USSS) and local CIA Station personnel to provide tactical local support.

(S//SI) Executive Protection Operations, also known as close support, is the number one priority for the SCS Special Operations Division (SOD). SCS was formally tasked to provide "real-time" SIGINT support for USSS Executive Protection of the President of the United States (POTUS) and the Vice President of the United States (VPOTUS) in July 1979. SOD responds to close support requirements levied by the U.S. Secret Service whenever these or (occasionally) other U.S. officials travel abroad. If the VIP is traveling to an area where there is a permanent SCS site, that site is tasked to provide close support. If there is no permanent SCS site, SOD deploys a three to five person team to the location, usually several days in advance of the VIP's travel date.

(S//SI) SCS typically supports anywhere from 10 to 15 Executive Protection missions a year; however this can vary depending on world events. In early 2002, SCS supported unprecedented back-to-back VPOTUS and POTUS trips involving twenty stops and requiring support from twelve SCS fixed sites and eight SOD-deployed close support teams.

(S//SI//REL) Close support teams scan the VHF/UHF spectrum for indications of threat activity against the VIP or host government, movements or activities of known terrorists in the host country, and demonstrations or potential riots. They also conduct sustained monitoring of host government security services, police communications and airport frequencies. The equipment suite used by SOD deployed teams is capable of monitoring and recording the RF range of 20Mhz to 1Ghz. It consists of an integrated receiver/processing platform capable of monitoring UHF/VHF PTT and cellular communications.

(S//SI//REL) The teams activate 24-hour coverage prior to the arrival of the VIP and remain operational until the protectee departs. Close support operations are normally staged out of the U.S. Embassy, Consulate or from a hotel room in close proximity to the VIP or venue. SCS works closely with Secret Service Intelligence Division (ID) Special Agents (SA) who maintain a 24-hour presence in the SCS workroom and have an ID SA lead with the protective detail that escorts the VIP. Any threat-related SIGINT that impacts on the executive is immediately passed to the on-site USSS agent and to NSA.

(TS//SI//REL) On a number of occasions, host-country officials have been aware of threat-related incidents and for whatever reason have been unwilling to share that information with the Secret Service protective details. SCS close support operations have successfully intercepted these types of communications on multiple occasions and tipped the USSS ID Special Agents. During the 1996 APEC Summit in Manila, for example, SCS intercepted Philippine police communications discussing a bomb located on a bridge in Former POTUS Clinton's motorcade route. Local authorities were attempting to quietly dismantle the bomb without notifying USSS. As a result of SCS close support, Secret Service was able to divert the motorcade to an alternative route. Similar adjustments have resulted from close support intercepts discussing local demonstrations and other potential incidents.

(S//SI) SCS/SOD continues to work to improve its support to the Secret Service's protective mission. Recently, it established standard procedures with the White House Communications Agency (WHCA) for shipping and storing collection equipment when SOD is deploying to

locations where no U.S. embassy or consulate exist or when time constraints preclude diplomatic pouching. In order to provide better real-time SIGINT support, SOD is exploring opportunities to increase bandwidth to the close support operations, possibly through WHCA resources, to enable collection and processing of GSM cellular communications in the field.

(S//SI) In addition, SOD and Secret Service ID have made significant steps to expand secure communications both in the field and back to headquarters. Secure wireless phones and STEs (Secure Terminal Equipment) allow all concerned ID agents - those working in the SCS work room, the ID lead with the protectee, and the ID Fusion Center at USSS Headquarters -- to communicate securely with each other. Most recently, SCS/SOD has established secure VoIP connectivity between the USSS ID Fusion Center and three SCS sites in Greece in support of executive protection for Former POTUS Bush who, along with over two-dozen family members, will be attending the summer Olympics.

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